

Security: 1

Approved For Release 2004/02/11 : CIA-RDP78B05703A000200040005-5

Surgend: 3 Aug

C/SS

Beard

Re: Fire report
dated 19 Aug concerning
Pass Room fire of 22 July

Please have for
[redacted] on 31 Aug
- a complete status
report of action taken
as result of Safety
Staff survey dated
26 Sept 69 with
estimated completion
dates of all pending
physical modifications.

Plan for effecting

Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

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recommendations to include
cost and completion
dates.

I assume recommendations
I will have been
implemented by PSG by
that date - - 31 Aug.

WLP
8/10

CENTER ROUTING SLIP

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FROM

PTOS

8/30

TO	INITIALS	DATE	REMARKS
DIRECTOR			A COPY, INCLUDING AN ANNEX WITH INTERVIEW REPORTS AND PHOTOS OF THE FIRE SCENE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO SUPPORT STAFF
DEP/DIRECTOR	3		
EXEC/DIRECTOR	2	8/20	
SPECIAL ASST	1	8/21	
ASST TO DIR	4	8/20	
HISTORIAN			
CH/PPBS			
DEP CH/PPBS			
EXO/PPBS			
CH/SS			
DEP CH/SS			
SC & P			
RECORDS MGT			
PERSONNEL			
LOGISTICS			
TRAINING			
SECURITY			
FINANCE			
CH/IEG			
DEP CH/IEG			
EXO/IEG			
CH/PSG			
DEP CH/PSG			
EXO/PSG			
CH/TSG			
DEP CH/TSG			
EXO/TSG			
DIR/IAS/DDI			
CH/DIAXX-4			
CH/DIAAP-9			
CH/SPAD			

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☐ SECRET

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

183-1

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Deputy Director of Security (PTOS)
4E70 Hqs

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

D/NPIC

1S518

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

FORM
3-62

610

USE PREVIOUS
EDITIONS

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Photographic
Interpretation Center

SUBJECT : Investigative Report - Fire in Press Room

Attached is the report of the investigation conducted by the
Safety Staff of the fire which occurred in on 22 July 1970.
Recommendations are presented for your attention and implementation.

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Deputy Director of Security (PTOS)

Att

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ATTACHMENT

FIRE INVESTIGATION

DATE & TIME : 22 July 1970, 1950 hours

AREA : NPIC,

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CAUSE : Alcohol ignited in
offset press

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ESTIMATED DAMAGE : Negligible

INVESTIGATED BY :

25X1

PERSONS INTERVIEWED:

(See Attachment A for Interviews)

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SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

1. The subject fire occurred in [] NPIC press room 2S467 on 22 July 1970 at 1950 hours. Flammable vapors of isopropyl alcohol being used by the operator on an [] 360 offset press ignited within the machine.

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2. Cause of the fire is attributed to alcohol vapors contacting the high heat of the improperly wired press motors.

3. Occupants of the area quickly extinguished the flames and there were no injuries. Damage was negligible.

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DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

1. The main press room for the National Photographic Interpretation Center is located on the second floor, room 2S467 of [redacted] The reception area of this press room was included in the routine building security patrol of NPIC Security Duty Officer [redacted]

[redacted] At 1950 hours, the time of the fire, [redacted] was in this area with [redacted] press supervisor.

2. [redacted] was operating press #2, an [redacted] 360 offset press. [redacted] had been running a deadline printing job from 1600 hours until the time of the fire. He was having difficulties with the impression cylinders and feed mechanisms of the press. He had applied approximately 12 ounces of isopropyl alcohol on the running gears of the press to free the clogged gears and keep the press operating. This procedure is apparently a normal device utilized by all press operators under deadline conditions and is done not to actually clean the presses but to prevent complete shutdown.

3. [redacted] was operating a similar type press located directly adjacent to #2 press. At the time of the fire, [redacted] was situated between the two presses.

4. The [redacted] 360 offset press (see attachment B-1) operates on a rating of 110v single phase. Two Emerson electric 110v single phase split phase induction motors are installed within the base of the press. Both motors have integrated centrifugal single pole switches which isolate the split phase windings after starting. A spark occurs across these switches before the motor reaches normal running speed. Under normal running conditions there are no electrical arcs within the motors. The total load for the press while running is 13 amps, 6 amps per motor and one amp drawn by the incandescent lamp attached to the delivery of the press. At the time of the fire, the electrical cords of both presses #2 and #3 were plugged into a 110v duplex floor receptacle (see attachment B-1) thus making the total load at the outlet 26 amperes. This outlet is serviced by a single pole breaker in the distribution panel (see attachment B-2). This obvious electrical overload is the cause of complaints by press operators that the breakers often trip and have to be reset to continue press operations.

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5. The continuous run temperature rating of the press motors is 50° Centigrade (122° Fahrenheit). This temperature is formulated under normal conditions including the voltage supplied to the presses. The overload on the circuit conductor as outlined in the preceding paragraph, would attribute an appreciable voltage drop thus causing a direct increase in current flow and temperature in the motors. Under normal conditions the motor temperature far exceeds the 53° flash point of isopropyl alcohol. The overload condition of the press motors apparently produced heat of sufficient temperature to cause ignition of the flammable alcohol vapors. An alternate and less probable cause for this ignition would have been a spark of unknown origin.

6. The initial explosion at 1950 hours within the press occurred outwardly with a muffled, contained noise according to witnesses' statements (see interviews attachment A). A panel cover on the inoperative side of press #2 was slightly warped from the explosion but did not detach from the press, thus preventing injury to [redacted] who was located between press #2 and #3. The #2 press operator, [redacted] immediately unplugged the electrical cord while [redacted] ran to the 15 lb CO₂ fire extinguisher located near the press room power distribution panel.

7. As [redacted] with extinguisher in hand was returning to the press which was emitting orange-colored flames to ceiling height, Messrs. [redacted] entered the room. The flames had contacted a ceiling mounted automatic combination rate-of-rise and set temperature heat detector installed directly over the #2 press. The automatic alarm zone #202 was immediately activated causing the local alarms within the area to sound. This alerted [redacted] [redacted] in the reception area.

8. Officer [redacted] USSP duty alarms console operator, was in the first floor building security and fire alarms control room at the time of the fire. The Kidde annunciator panel has visible and audible fire zone indicators for all sections of the building covered by the fire alarms system. When the annunciator activated with an automatic alarms indication for fire zone #202, Officer [redacted] followed a standard operating procedure by attempting to reset the panel. The panel did reset at the first try thus indicating a return by the zone to normal conditions.

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25X1 9. The immediate reset of the fire alarms is directly attributed to [] action in quickly extinguishing the fire in press #2. Two automatic sprinkler deflectors are installed directly over press #2. Activation of these sprinklers occurs at 165° Fahrenheit. This was prevented by the fast response of [] prior to reaching the press, had tripped all circuit breakers at the electrical panel and ordered evacuation of the building via 2-way portable radio. The evacuation alarms were activated by Officer [] at 1951 hours and approximately 35 persons evacuated the building in an orderly manner.

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25X1 10. [] inspected the interior of the press and extinguished smoldering paper remnants which had accumulated due to a defective stock gripper. The building duty engineer and electrician were then personally notified by [] of the situation. The progress of the evacuation was checked by [] who was informed at the main first floor entrance by USSP personnel that a few persons showed reluctance to depart the building. The guards, however, directed these persons to evacuate the building with little difficulty.

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25X1 11. [] returned to the press room and at 2000 hours ordered the evacuation alarms silenced having assured a normal situation. [] provided assistance in the main lobby area for personnel re-entering the building.

25X1 12. The preceding events occurred over a period of approximately 20 minutes, from the time of the explosion at 1950 hours until 2010 hours when [] returned to his office to notify appropriate personnel of the situation.

13. Investigation by the Safety Staff has revealed discrepancies still remaining in the press room area. These discrepancies, as well as recommendations for remedial action, are listed in the conclusion of this report.

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CONCLUSION

25X1 1. Investigation by the Safety Staff of this incident has revealed several pertinent facts; the most prominent being in reference to the outstanding emergency reaction by all personnel concerned, especially that of [] Expansion of this fire, fed by readily available fuels such as cleaning chemicals, printing ink, lubricating oil and paper could have proved disastrous. [] also prevented 25X1 water damage by extinguishing the fire before it could activate exposed sprinkler deflectors.

25X1 2. The cause of the fire is directly attributed to the use of alcohol on the running press. The Safety Staff has determined, however, this was not negligence on [] part, but rather an acquired procedure utilized by press operators working on deadline orders. Alleviation of this practice is outlined in recommendations of this report.

25X1 3. The [] presses have inadequate electrical service. The Safety Staff representative noted several violations of applicable electrical code requirements pertaining to improper press grounding, circuit conductor wiring, use of multi-outlets, hazardous receptacle locations and overloaded circuit breakers (see attachment B-3). This is also true of equipment in the bindery section (see attachment B-4). Remedial action is covered in recommendations of this report. These deficiencies were included in a Safety Staff survey report dated 26 September 1969 forwarded to the Director, NPIC.

25X1 4. The Safety Staff representative observed the following chemical solutions stored in non-safety type cans within the press room:

5 gallons - [] offset roller cleaner
& blanket wash, Pt #4-4317
5 gallons - Multilith Blankarols, Pt #200-770-SA
5 gallons - Roger Sol two-step waltzing wash
#RM-411

These chemicals are all rated combustible by NYFDC of A#1916. Requirements for proper storage of these and other cleaning compounds are included under recommendations.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Safety Staff recommends a complete electrical survey be conducted on a priority basis of all equipment wiring in the press room area including the bindery section. The electrical circuitry should be rearranged to conform to applicable provisions set forth under National Fire Protection Association Volume 5, No. 70, which details electrical code requirements.

2. A preventive maintenance program of cleaning presses and related equipment should be established and adhered to. The practice of unclogging running presses with flammable liquids including alcohol should be immediately discontinued.

3. Safety cans with flash arrestors should be provided for storage of combustible solvents in the press room area. Oily waste cans should be utilized in disposing of cleaning rags used with these solvents. A separate, fire rated enclosure should be provided for the press room chemicals now being stored in the annex.

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